



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

**Richland Operations
Office**

DOE News Release

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**DOE Assistant Secretary Announces Completion of
Major Recovery Act Project**

\$100 Million in Upgrades to Disposal Facility Completed Ahead of Schedule

RICHLAND, Wash. – The Department of Energy’s new Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, [David Huizenga](#), along with local DOE and contractor officials, announced the completion of \$100 million in upgrades to the [Hanford Site’s](#) disposal facility for low-level radioactive waste.

The facility receives most of the contaminated soil, demolition debris, and solid waste from cleanup operations across the 586-square-mile Site in southeast Washington. DOE and its contractors are demolishing hundreds of former plutonium processing facilities, excavating millions of tons of contaminated soil, and retrieving buried solid waste resulting from more than 40 years of producing plutonium at the government site during World War II and the Cold War.

Using funding provided by the [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#) of 2009, DOE and contractor [Washington Closure Hanford](#) completed major upgrades to the [Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility](#). To date, nearly 12 million tons of cleanup debris have been placed in the lined landfill in the center of the Hanford Site.

“Hanford was entrusted with almost \$2 billion in funding, and the progress being made is very evident here at the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility,” said David Huizenga, DOE Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management. “Facility upgrades have improved safety for the workers who are handling record volumes of waste generated by cleanup.”

“The expansions and upgrades to this facility will help us achieve our 2015 vision of completing nearly all of the cleanup work along the Columbia River,” said DOE Richland Operations Office Manager Matt McCormick. “The upgrades provide enough room for millions more tons of debris from cleanup, and they improve the safety and efficiency of handling all of the material as it is placed here for disposal.”

Contractor Washington Closure Hanford and subcontractors TradeWind Services, DelHur Industries, and ELR Fowler completed several major upgrades to the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility.

- Designed and constructed two new disposal cells, known as “super cells” because of their size in relation to disposal cells constructed prior to 2009, adding 5.6 million tons of capacity to the facility (bringing the total capacity to 16.4 million tons)

- Replaced aging and too-small maintenance and operations facilities with modern facilities that improve efficiency and safety of the facility and better support the long-term cleanup mission
- Upgraded the leachate collection system, which collects potentially contaminated liquids from a liner beneath the disposal facility that is generated during disposal operations from dust control and precipitation.
- Purchased additional trucks, containers and heavy equipment used to haul waste to the ERDF, place the waste in the disposal cells and compact the waste to meet disposal requirements,
- Constructed additional entrances, roadways, and disposal ramps to allow for safer access and improved traffic control to support the increased waste disposal rates
- Constructed a new staging area for transferring full containers for disposal and empty containers for pickup

The Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility is a disposal facility for low-level radioactive waste, including waste that contains hazardous chemicals, known as mixed waste. The facility was built in 1996 to accept contaminated soil and debris generated during Hanford cleanup operations and is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The facility covers an area of about 52 football fields and already contains about 12 million tons of waste.

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